

Faculty Biographies

Christy Lawton, Moderator. Christy is the current Division Director for the Office of Children’s Services. Ms. Lawton has been working at OCS for the past 14-years in a number of various roles. She began as a front line investigator in and from there worked in a number of different sections while working her way up through the supervisory and managerial tracks. She was appointed as the Director in April 2011 by Governor Parnell. Ms. Lawton holds a BA in Social Work from UAF and a MSW from UAA where she was in the first graduating class from UA’s MSW program. Ms. Lawton is passionate about the field of child welfare and serving Alaskan families statewide. Safe children, strong families is the vision of the OCS and Ms. Lawton is dedicated to ensuring every day that the agency does its very best to ensure positive outcomes for those we serve. Ms. Lawton is the proud parent of two young children and she and her family currently reside in Fairbanks.

Jadelle Bliss & Scott Stenhouse, Panelists. Jadelle & Scott moved from California to Alaska (where Scott grew up) in June of 2011. They love Alaska and plan to raise their children here. They have been married for four years and are the proud parents of two adorable children, Blaze (4) and Ocean (2). Jadelle is a stay-at-home mom, and Scott is a plumber by trade and currently working in the construction business. They are willing to share their experiences in the child protection system in the hopes that they can motivate other parents and provide child welfare practitioners with successful strategies for working with families.

Angel Gonzales, Panelist. Angel is 24 years old, married, and has 6 step-children. Angel is currently employed by the Alaska Youth & Family Network as a Peer Navigator, a Youth MOVE (Motivating Others through Voices of Experience) Coordinator, and a Youth FASD Co-Chair. As an alumni of the foster care system, Angel is a member of FFCA (Facing Foster Care in Alaska), and has presented at many conferences, including the Alaska CASA/GAL Conference and, most recently, the Western and Pacific Child Welfare Implementation Center conference in Juneau. Angel’s article, “Disconnection From and Reconnection to My Culture” was published in the Winter 2009 issue of National CASA’s *Connection Magazine*. Angel has completed 3 semesters of college at UAA and hopes to graduate with degrees in psychology and art.

Mechele Adams, Panelist. Mechele is currently employed at Alaska Regional Hospital as a supervisor in the communications department. She is active in her church, where she serves as Director of Children's Ministry, Director of Youth Ministry, Outreach Coordinator and Choir Director. Mechele is also a CASA volunteer and has taken the advanced training to become a volunteer guardian ad litem. Mechele and her husband Ricky have been married for nearly 30 years; in addition to Ricky's four children, they have one biological son and have adopted 12 children, ranging in age from 4 to 24. They were foster parents for OCS for 17 years and have seen many children reunified with their parents, which is Mechele’s “true passion and joy.”